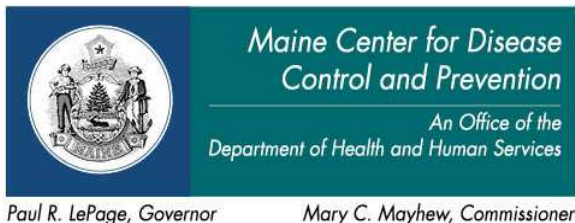


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*Dr. Sheila Pinette, Osteopathic physician
Director, Maine CDC*

Public Health Update

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Updates

Flu

Flu is widespread in Maine with lab-confirmed cases reported in all counties. A total of 25 new outbreaks were reported during the week ending January 17, 2015.

Maine CDC still strongly recommends a flu vaccine if you haven't already been vaccinated. Although the vaccine is not a good match to the strain of flu circulating the most in the U.S., getting vaccinated may offer some level of protection from symptoms. The vaccine also provides protection against three other strains of flu.

Clinical recommendations and guidelines are available in health alerts issued Dec. 5 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/F4Vd>), Jan. 6 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/t23C>), and Jan. 15 (<http://go.usa.gov/JXyY>).

Weekly updates on flu cases are available online:

- for Maine: <http://go.usa.gov/NoK>
- for the US: <http://go.usa.gov/ITB>
- for the world: <http://go.usa.gov/ITK>

Maine CDC reminds everyone to take everyday preventive measures against the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Get vaccinated. To find a flu vaccine in your area, search <http://flushot.healthmap.org/> or contact your health care provider or pharmacy.

If you have the flu:

- Stay home if you are sick, until you are fever-free for a

full 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine.

- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.
- Although most people can stay home to recover without seeing a health care provider, **it is possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu. Anyone with the flu should seek medical attention for:**
 - Dehydration
 - Trouble breathing
 - Getting better, then suddenly getting a lot worse
 - Any major change in condition

For more information, go to

www.maine flu.gov or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Cervical Cancer

Maine CDC reminds women of the importance of regular screenings to prevent cervical cancer as it recognizes January as National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

"As many as 93 percent of cervical cancers could be prevented by screening and HPV vaccination" said Dr. Sheila Pinette, Director of the Maine CDC. "If a woman has never had a Pap test or it has been more than three years since her last test, it may be time for her to speak with a healthcare provider and schedule a test."

Before the development of the Pap test, cervical cancer was one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women. As an available, accepted, and cost-effective screening test, the Pap test can detect cervical cell changes before they become cancerous. Governor Paul LePage and First Lady Ann LePage encourage Maine women to take this important preventative measure because of its effectiveness.

Starting at age 21, routine Pap tests for women can find potentially cancerous cells growing in the cervix. As the Human papillomavirus (HPV) is associated with most cervical cancers, current cervical cancer screening recommendations include the high-risk HPV DNA test along with the Pap test for women age 30-65. Women should talk with their doctors, as screening recommendations can vary for each individual.

The Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program can provide information about screening tests, as well as limited resources for free cancer screening services for women over age 35 who have never had a Pap test and meet financial eligibility requirements. Those interested can call 1-800-350-5180 or 1-207-287-8068. TTY users can call Maine Relay at 711.

More details can also be found at: <http://go.usa.gov/JXyQ>

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Cases of pertussis (whooping cough) continue to be reported statewide.

As of January 20, 2015, providers reported a total of 556 pertussis cases from all 16 counties in 2014. The majority of the cases are in school-aged children and more than a third of the cases were reported since school started in the fall.

Maine CDC encourages providers continue to test and treat patients. DTaP vaccine is recommended for all infants and children. Tdap vaccine is recommended for all preteens, teens, and adults.

For more guidance and information, visit <http://go.usa.gov/dCO>

Ebola

There have been no reported cases of Ebola in Maine.

The current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is the largest outbreak of Ebola ever documented and the first recorded in West Africa. For ongoing information about the outbreak in West Africa, go to <http://go.usa.gov/Eu9B>

US CDC advises US residents to avoid all non-essential travel to the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. All travelers entering the US from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea in the last 21 days will arrive through one of five major US airports: JFK in New York; Newark in New Jersey; Atlanta, Georgia; Dulles in Washington, DC; and O'Hare in Chicago. For more details, see: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

For more information, visit www.maine.gov/ebola

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- Facebook (www.facebook.com/MaineCDC)
- Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MEPublicHealth>)
- Blog (<http://mainepublichealth.blogspot.com>)

For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line: 1-800-821-5821

For questions and potential exposure to poison, call the Poison Center's 24-hour phone line: 1-800-222-1222

For road conditions, closures, and detours: call 5-1-1 or visit www.511maine.gov.

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